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AN  
ANSWER  
TO

Dr. *SHERLOCK*'s Examination  
OF THE

**Oxford Decree :**

IN

A Letter from a Member of that University, to his Friend in *London*.

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L O N D O N :

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A N  
ANSWER

T O

Dr. SHERLOCK's Examination, &c.

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AN  
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TO  
D. SHERIDAN'S Examination &c.

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A N  
A N S W E R  
T O

Dr. *SHERLOCK*'s Examination, &c.

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Jan. 3. 1695.

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Sir,

**A**S to what you ask concerning Dr. *Sherlock's Modest Examination of the Oxford Decree* (as he calls it) I have seen it ; And find, he is very Angry and under great Mistakes.

B

He

He is set forth in the Frontispiece, with his Titles at large *WILLIAM SHERLOCK*, D. D. *Dean of St. Pauls, Master of the Temple, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.* And thinks much that what he says (though without naming him) should be censured, *considering his Profession, Character, and Station in the Church,* p. 2.

The Title he gives it, *Decretum Oxoniense*, or the *Oxford Decree*, is (for ought I know) a Title of his own; sure, 'tis none of theirs who made it, who are therefore therein not concerned.

Nor was he Named in it; but only a Sermon censured which was Preached at *Oxford* by another Person. If Dr. *Sherlock* be of the same mind with that other Person, who can help it?

'Twas

'Twas *Printed* (he says) in *Latin*, in these words, &c. True ; but not with that spelling ; for instance, *Prefectorum* was not Printed (once and again) with a single *e*, instead of *Præfectorum* with an *æ*.

And it was hoped so great a *Critick* as he would be thought (pag. 5.) might have been able to spell true, when he had a Printed Copy before him.

He then fancies (or would be thought to think) that some *Malicious Animadverter* (p. 15.) had *Translated this Latin into English*, for the *Benefit and Edification of his English Readers*. But that is one of his great mistakes. 'Twas Printed at *Oxford*, both in *Latin* and *English*, the same Day ; and by the same Authority ( and 'tis believed Dr. *Sherlock* knows it was ; ) And the *English* (as there Printed) is as much an *Original*

nal as the *Latin*; how it is Re-printed at London, I know not.) But I doubt the Animadverter (if he had done it) would rather have said, It was for *Benefit and Edification of Dr. Sherlock*, for fear he should not have understood *Latin*; for it is at this rate they use to talk to one another.

If the Hawkers at London, have caused it to be Re-printed, with a *New Title* and *Notes* upon it (to make it sell the better) and put it into the *Weekly Advertisements* for that purpose, who can help it?

But the Critick finds fault with the *Latin*, as transgressing the plain *Rules of Grammar*, in using *Eorum fidei & curæ*, for *sux*. Of that let the Criticks judge. If *their* care had been meant of *them* jointly, I think the word *sux* might have been used; but when to be understood of *them* *Respectively*, I think *eorum* doth better. And I would fain know by what

what plain Rule of Dr. Sherlock's Grammar (if he have a Grammar) *eorum* may not be so used.

But I would not advise Dr. Sherlock to venture too much at Criticism. I doubt his Talent doth not lie that way; in what cases we must use *sua*, and in what *eorum*, and in what we may indifferently use *either*; better Criticks than Dr. Sherlock and I, will not take upon them to determine.

The pretended false English in that Remark (whose ever it be) It may be noted, that the Propositions abovementioned are Dr. Sherlock's in his Discourse of the Trinity, and the Defenders of it (of that Discourse) and wrote against by the Animadverter, I am yet to seek; I think true English. When Dr. Sherlock tells us where the bad English lies, let the Noter Answer it. Mean while, I think his two Criticisms, to be two mistakes.

He



He tells us, *The Decree of the Oxford Convocation is indeed Decretum Oxoniense, or a Decree of the University of Oxford, (be it so;) but not that of the Heads of Colleges and Halls.* Very true; nor do they say it is. But, if that would do him a kindness, a Vote of Convocation might have been had as easily. For, as I do not hear that any one dissented, in the meeting of Heads; so I believe there would have been as few in Convocation, if it had been proposed there. Some perhaps would rather have had it passed, not there only, but *in Convocation also*; but, if so, it was to pass there first, before it come to Convocation.

But he says, p. 6. *The Statutes refer such censures, not to the Meeting of Heads, but to the Vice-chancellor and six Heads, Doctors of Divinity, and to one or both of the Professors of Divinity.*

The

The word *Heads*, in this last Clause, is another of his Mistakes, for it is not requisite, that *the six Doctors of Divinity* should all be *Heads of Houses*; the Vice-chancellor may as well advise with other Doctors.

But be it so; there were at least *six Heads of Houses, Doctors of Divinity, and one or both of the two Professors of Divinity*. But is it there said, He may not advise with *more than six*? If instead of calling *six Heads*, he call them *All*, is there any hurt in this? Especially when they are all Unanimous?

But, he says, *P. 3.* they were not all present (very good; before we had too many, now we have too few.) But all were warned; and if some chanced to be out of Town, who can help it? It would have been so in a Convocation.

Some



Some of the *Wiseſt Heads* (he ſays) were abſent, and ſome preſent Diſſented. That ſome were abſent is very like: But that any preſent did Diſſent, I have not heard, or that any then abſent did diſlike the Sentence.

But if the Meeting of the *Heads of Houſes* be ſo Venerable an Authority; he will (he ſays) undertake, any day in the year to procure a meeting of twice as many, as *Wiſe and Learned Men* to cenſure their Decree, (very modeſtly ſpoken!) No doubt but he and his are *Wiſe and Learned Men*, (at leaſt, he thinks ſo.) But what are thoſe *Wiſe and Learned Men* to do? To cenſure their Decree. Very good! Perhaps they would (ſome of them, not many,) adviſe to put *ſua* inſtead of *eorum*. But would they ſay (as he doth) That the three Perſons in the Trinity, are Three diſtinct Infinite Minds and Spirits, and three Individual Subſtances? I doubt he would not find it ſo eaſy (every day

day in the Year) to procure a Meeting of Twelve so many Wise and Learned Men, to say This. I do not find that his New Doctrine, doth make so many Profelites.

But supposing their Authority, he asks, How far their Authority extends? I say, If it extend so far as to censure our own Members; 'tis enough for our turn at present. Dr. Sherlock, if he please, may keep out of their reach. And the words of the Statute be large enough, *Hæreticos, Schismaticos, & quoscunque alios minus recte de fide Catholica, & Doctrina vel Disciplina Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Sentientes, usque tam Conciones quam Libri, quibus male-sanæ opiniones, propagantur, cohibeantur.* And this referred (with Dr. Sherlock's good leave) *Vice-cancellarii judicio, assidentibus ipsi Præfectis in ordinario ipsorum Conventu;* (in the Chapter *De Autoritate & Officia Vice-cancellarii.*) And, as to Sermons in particular, (in the Chapter *De Offensionis & Dissensionis materia in Concionibus evitanda*) *si quis pro Concione aliqua, intra Universita-*

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versita-

*versitatem ejusve præcinctum habita, quicquam Doctrinæ vel Disciplinæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ publice receptæ dissonum aut contrarium — protulerit, siue protulisse ab ipso Vice-cancellario suspectus, vel ab alio aliquo rationabilem suspicionis causam afferente, delatus fuerit; the Vice-chancellor or his Deputy is to proceed as is there directed, Adhibito consilio sex aliorum S. Theol. Doctorum (quorum unus sit S. Theologiæ Professor Regius si concioni interfuerit). But because Dr. Sherlock (tho he pretend to cite them) doth confess he doth not know our Statutes; I shall admit this excuse of Ignorance for his Mistakes; Provided he will forbear thus to talk of he knows not what.*

Now as to what the Vice-chancellor is thus to censure, it may be presumed that he (with the Advise aforesaid) is (in some measure) to make some judgment of it, in order to such Censure. How far (out of the present case) they may declare and decree *Heresy*,

resy, I shall not take upon me to determine. A Judg, in his ordinary Proceedings, tho I think he is not to declare *New Treasons* (besides those enumerated in the *Statute of Treasons*;) yet when a case is to be tryed before him, I suppose he may declare, whether he think the fact in question, to be *Treason within that Statute*. But of this, let those judge, whose business it is to understand the Law.

I confess also, that I do not take *our Statutes*, to be the *Law of the Land*, (for the whole Nation;) but they be *our Rule* (by which we are to proceed as to our own members.) Ratified to us by the Arch-bishop of *Canterbury*, under his Archiepiscopal Seal; and by the King's Majesty under the Great Seal of *England*.

The Statute of *1. Eliz.* is (I suppose) to be understood of such *Legal Conviction* (in



order to Burning) as upon which (as the Law then stood) the Writ *De Hæretico comburendo*, was of course to issue ; which is not the present case.

That the Paper of Complaint was signed *but by Two* ; I believe is true. One had been enough. And the Vice-Chancellor was satisfied there needed no more. And therefore did forbid the gathering of more Hands : Because he meant to proceed calmly, not tumultuously. (And, in so doing, I think he did wisely.) And it had been dispatched sooner ; but that the business of Entertaining the King, did retard it till that Solemnity was over.

But a main business of these Angry Papers, is, a Quarel between Dr. *Sherlock*, and (his *Malicious Animadverter*) Dr. *South*. The Vice-chancellor and Heads of Houses had said

said nothing of Dr. *Sherlock*, but had only censured an offensive Sermon, which they could not approve of, but might be supposed to do, if (when Preached to their Faces) they shewed no dislike of it. But Dr. *Sherlock* (whose Doctrine was the same) brings himself into the Quarel by a side wind. He first supposeth that the Complaint was commenced by Dr. *South* (which was a mistake, for the Sermon was complained of, the same day it was Preached (or that following) before Dr. *South* knew any thing of it; being at that time far enough from *Oxford*.) That the person who Preached it, was never *summoned* or questioned for it (which is a mistake; for upon the first complaint the person was summoned, and did appear, and did give his Answer in writing, owned the words, and said what he had to say in excuse thereof; and this his Answer was communicated to the Heads of Houses.) Next,  
That

That their censure was in *Latine* only (whereas it was Originally in *English* also.) Then, that it was *Translated* by his *Mother* Animadverter (when-as there was no such matter.) That He caused it to be *Reprinted* at *London*; That there He gave it a new *Title*; That He made the *Remarks* in the *Post-script*; That, when He had railed himself out of *Breath*, he called for a *Decretum Oxoniense* to help him; which was the wisest thing he could do. That *Dr. South* solicited the Cause with such *Zeal* and *Importunity* as could not be resisted; That He glories in it; That He Published it in one of the *weekly Prints*; and much more to the same purpose. Now if you ask, How he knows all this? His proof is, *It may be supposed*, and *It is easy to guess*, p. 5. Now much of this we know to be false; And if we should add, *It may be supposed*, that the rest is so too; would not this be as good a Proof? Or, if it should be said, That



That Dr. Sherlock being baffled by Dr. South, and having *railed* to no purpose, got a young Man to Preach his Doctrine in the face of the University (*which happened as if it had been contrived*) that in case (as was hoped) the University had taken it patiently, he might have gloried, that the University of Oxford found no fault with his Doctrine; which might furnish him with new Topics of Railing and Triumpling: Would not, *It may be supposed*, do as well here? Only we cannot say, *It happened Luckily for his purpose*; but rather *Unluckily*.

But be this as it will: Let the two Doctors agree that point amongst themselves, or let the *Animadverter* and the *Defender* Fight it out. The Decree (as he calls it) names neither; but only Censures a third person. That this person *was not summoned*, is not true. Summoned he was; and had given  
in

in his Answer, in Writing, under his hand; and upon that Answer the Vice-chancellor and Heads of Houses did proceed. They did Condemn the Doctrine, and forbid the Preaching it, (by him or any other) why they were so kind as to proceed no farther against him, many reasons may be alledged. He had (while the business was depending) quitted the University, and was gone; and 'twas hoped (being a young man) he would be more wary; and avoid the like for the future.

And if Dr. *Sherlock*, would in time have done the like, I think he had done better; and I believe the best of his Friends think so too. When he had let fall some unwary expressions, and not justifiable; he might have retracted them with as little discredit as he has done some other. And it would be the wisest thing he could do.

What

What are the thousand *Jacobite Stories* he talks of (p. 11.) I know not : Whether now he be or be not a *Jacobite*, whether he have or have not been ; or whether sometime he have and sometime have not ; is nothing to this purpose.

If he will still insist upon it, that If a *Person* be a *Mind*, a *Spirit*, a *Substance*, then three *Persons* must be Three distinct *Minds*, *Spirits* and *Substances*, p. 18. (as distinct as *Adam* and *Abel*, though not separate, p. 20.) he knows it will not be allowed him : Because *Mind*, *Spirit*, *Substance*, are (in their proper signification) *Absolute* ; but *Person* (in its proper signification) is a *Relative Term*. If *Dr. Sherlock* were *Dean of Pauls*, *Dean of Windsor*, and *Dean of Westminster* ; should we thence argue, that since a *Dean* is a *Man*, an *Animal*, a *Substance*, therefore because of three *Distinct*, *Substantial Deanaries*, they be, (or he is) three.

D.

distinct

*distinct Men, three distinct Animals, and three distinct Substances ?* I think not. Because *Man, Animal, Substance*, are terms *Absolute*, but *Dean* is *Relative*.

And this hath been told him so often, that we cannot think him so dull, as not to Apprehend the Distinction, but so wilful, as that he scorns to own it; but would still have us think that *Mind, Spirit, Person*, are terms Equivalent; which will not be admitted. Or, if they be equivalent; why cannot he content himself with (what is generally received) *three Persons*, but must impose upon us his New Terms of *Three distinct Minds, Three distinct Spirits, and Three distinct Substances ?* But Scorn and Flouncing will not carry it off.

If St. Hilary have sometime called them *tres substantias*; he may know, that *substantia* was



was at that time an ambiguous term, and taken sometimes as the *Latine* word for *Hypostasis*, and sometimes for *Ousia*, (for which reason the *Latines* were, for some time, shy of admitting the term *Hypostasis*, least it should be thought to imply the same with *Substantia*, in the same sense with *Ousia*.) But when as now (for some Ages) it is agreed (for prevention of Ambiguity) in the one sense, to call it *substance*, and in the other *subsistence*, it is not now the same to call them *three substances* (in contradiction to three *subsistences*) as then it was, while the word was used Ambiguously in both senses.

This (I suppose) may satisfy you, (so far as concerns the Vice-chancellor and Heads of Houses; ) if it will not satisfy Dr. *Sherlock*, let him and the Animadverter dispute it out.

Yours, &c.











